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quivalent satisfactory to the Clergy and the Laity ; and your Petitioners therefore most humbly entreat this Honourable House will be graciously pleased to take this most

important matter into its immediate consideration.

And your petitioners will ever pray.
Kilkenny, Oct. 15th 1812.

MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

THE late Parliament having, like other Parliaments, begun to show some symptoms of repentance and amendment in the latter period of its existence, has experienced a premature dissolution. Administration finds it expedient, perhaps necessary, to arrest the attention and occupy the minds of the people by what is called an exercise of the rights of election. Whatever may have been the intendment of the constitution, the House of Commons is not an elective, but, to all purposes, an *hereditary* House. It belongs as an inheritance to the borough estate, the fourth estate in the practice of the constitution. The form and semblance of freedom may be preserved, but the component materials of the House of Commons is perfectly the same, after as before a new election ; and after this moveable part of the government has suffered a little shaking, all settle, and subside in much the same situation ; a state in which the people may be said to be personated rather than represented. The paltry interest which the public appears to hold in that House, shades their eyes from its real condition, as well as their own ; and the occasional periodical bustle gives a certain air of liberty, a certain unintelligible something, that intoxicates the country, for a time, into a wretched satisfaction, and a disgraceful acquiescence.

In fact, the good people of these countries will, in many places, be put to much trouble and loss of time, for very little, or for no purpose ; for

a half or whole dozen of new faces on the benches of the House, who, even on the supposition of their being active and zealous patriots, will never be of much *personal* weight, and will never be able to acquire any *party* importance. This assembly is conducted on the principles of a fashionable club ; it is a place for the minor nobility of the land : (" barones minores") for a certain cast or grade of fashionable society, which willingly admits, and associates with only those of the same description, and easily contrives means for rejecting, and *virtually* expelling, or placing in Coventry, all those without that necessary qualification either of title or of wealth, however acquired, which is essential to become a member of the *club*. Individuals, without such pre-requisites, may be *intruded* by personal ability, or the foolish impulse of the people ; but they will quickly find themselves gasping, painfully, and unprofitably, in a new element, and, after a few fruitless efforts, will quickly conform to the necessity of resting on their seats, and holding close their mouths. Sir Francis Burdett is heard, from his rank, wealth, and situation in polite society ; but John Horne Tooke, a man of the greatest intrepidity of mind, and power of forehead, after being listened to once and again, was *obliged* to succumb into silence. There is an understood mode of hustling, and of hushing the most obstinate and obstreperous orator ; and it appears strange that such men as Mr. Waithman or Mr. Cobbett would

be desirous to encounter the same fate as a Dick Martin, or a Jack Fuller.

Let them keep their places in the Parliament of the people, a great House of Commons, where they may be cheered by popular applause, and not chilled by the "*subintelligitur*" of the society into which they might, perchance, be thrust. Bonaparte has indeed designated the British people as a nation of shop-keepers; but his observation was, we suppose, merely applied to its exterior relations: for, assuredly, neither a single shop-keeper, nor a ci-devant soldier will ever be suffered to occupy the attention of the honourable and right honourable House. By the acquisition of great wealth, and by a title even of the lowest kind, which indicates a gracious adoption into the privileged class, a man may gradually wear off the husk of early life; and thus a rich calico-manufacturer may receive the honour of knighthood, and his son, in due course of time, may become chief-secretary to a Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; but these are exceptions only to the prescribed rule of our polished society, and whatever strange assemblage may form the composition of an American congress, such a motley and miscellaneous mixture will never be suffered to contaminate the British House of Commons.

That is a House of minor aristocracy; and, as at present constituted, must always *repel*, by a rule of *manners*, which often has more influence than either moral or political principle, a real representation of the people. But there is, on this very account, a strength of public opinion (a mighty *estate* in the history of our constitution) diffused through these Islands, or concentrated in the press, which, no doubt assisted by the embarrassments of government,

and the exigencies of the times, is every day better heard, and felt, and understood. As these embarrassments increase, public opinion will be better represented, not in this, or that instance, but in some sudden conversion, affecting the whole House. Such complete mutations have not unfrequently occurred, and are again likely to occur.

In fact, the apathy of the people may, under one point of view, be considered as a sort of public protest; and in consequence, a non-consumption agreement tacitly entered into in matters of constitution respecting the exercise of elective rights, which have so notoriously become the monopoly of individuals, and are a sort of patent manufacture, disposed of for their exclusive emolument. The people have, in reality, seceded, as a public, from the constitution, because an oligarchy have completely established themselves in the citadel. Were this secession universal, instead of being partial, the borough estate might perhaps be rendered sensible of its intrinsic insignificance, and the minister would be left alone with a terrible shadow, an unreal mockery of representation. He would become naked, and perhaps feel ashamed. It is the partial, yet perfectly inefficient exercise of popular election, which serves the enemies of reform; it is this which cloaths with flesh, strengthens with sinews, and inspires with life and energy, the ghastly skeleton of borough representation.

The people of these countries are, as a public, represented best, at present, by the periodic press. By its means, a power of public opinion has been gradually accumulated which has already had its influence within the walls of Parliament, and will continue to have it, the more from *not* being represented in

the Commons House. The constituent body is, in fact, beginning to think, and write, and read, and speak for and of itself, and in extent of information on the true interests of the country, has taken the lead of the representing body. Whatever may be said to the contrary, the state of the nation, and the general sentiment abroad, will, as it has already done in the Catholic question, and in the repeal of the Orders of Council, be attended to, and, and in no long time, obeyed.

In this point of view, the conduct of particular counties, such as of Down or of Antrim, is of little importance. We should not be surprised, if, in a single day, the two noble representatives lately returned (with a large majority of the House), would change and veer about like a vane, in the tempest of the times.

Indeed, we have never seen a set of honest country-gentlemen *so at a fault*, as the honourable members that compose the Down-Hunt; and we acknowledge, that we too, like the late member, are "sorry for the county." But if there be any real design to effectuate a free election in that county, it should not be taken unprepared. It should have a standing committee appointed immediately, (as the interval between this and a new election may not be a very long one,) the sole business of which committee should be to meet monthly in different stations throughout the county, and to prepare, in seasonable time, an effectual resistance to the new coalition. But we fear, that a grand-jury, in itself a county Parliament, nominated by an officer of the Crown, has little sympathy with popular privileges, and would even fear to part with their own influence in the restoration of the practical exercise of the elective right to their tenant-

ry. In fact, the constitution of the county, as at present abused, is a machine acting with a long catenation on the people, and managed at the will and for the interest of particular orders, and for the benefit of the propertied portion of the community, without any liberty of choice in the remainder. But the condition of the people in these countries will operate as a *short money-bill*; and will shortly purify the House of Commons, and renovate the constitution. The voice of the *society itself* will, in no long time, prevail. The progress of intellect, and the progress of liberality in public sentiment, has prepared the way for a reform that cannot be much longer procrastinated. It would not have been decorous to have demanded a reform in representation, while the public, in great part, were obstinately unwilling to extend the enjoyment of equal rights to their Catholic fellow subjects. But wisely and providently, they now wish for the extension of those political rights to others, which will gain a great accession of strength to their own claims on the constitutional authorities for a rightful share in the constitution. The unfranchised Protestant is as the disfranchised Catholic. Emancipation will prove the Pioneer for reform.

It may not be deemed prudent for the body at present petitioning to introduce even into their meetings the subject of reform. They have enemies enow to encounter. But emancipation and reform are in reality assimilated in their nature, and we confidently trust, that whenever the Catholics of Ireland obtain political power, they will prove themselves equally enlightened with the reforming party in the true principles of political justice. We hope much from the introduction of so much ability into the House

of the people, and if any one will take the trouble of comparing the display of talent in a single Catholic at the Antrim Catholic meeting, with the strange anarchy, inconsistency, and very moderate ability manifested in an assemblage of the first gentlemen of the County of Down,* he will gladly anticipate the season which will give Catholic abilities the opportunity of approving themselves the worthy guardians of the temple of the laws, and the sacred altar of the constitution. The posterity of those who acquired Magna Charta will be able to defend the true principles and better practices of the British government.

In England, the elections have generally turned against the popular candidates. The mild, the firm, the persevering in the cause of humanity, the virtuous Sir Samuel Romilly, has been ejected from Bristol. Brougham and Creevy have been defeated by the power of the Tory party at Liverpool; and Alderman Wood and Robert Waithman, men who were honest in the worst of times, and have long struggled against what one of their committees lately emphatically styled "THE GIGANTIC CORRUPTION OF THE METROPOLIS," have lost their election for London. Westminster stands proudly pre-eminent in the purity of election, by returning Sir Francis Burdett and Lord Cochrane free of all expense, and not even permitting any personal interference on the part of Lord Cochrane. In these cases of failure, the overwhelming influence of power, and those attached to the side of power for sinister purposes, have overpowered the efforts of individuals who have bravely attempted to stem the mighty

current. Thus things may go on for a time, and become worse, before there is a change for the better; but corruption must in time, perhaps at no distant period, exhaust its own resources by prodigal expenditure, and then it may be hoped that virtue will resume her power and her energies, now appearing to lie dormant. But in the mean time, let the people not lose their spirit. The struggle is important. In the midst of discouragements, let them do their present duty, and hope, and be prepared for better times.

A late writer* observing on the long continued contests between the Jesuits, and the philosophers of Port Royal, in which the former had a temporary triumph, thus energetically illustrates the subject: "Europe then, as now in its ranker maturity, seemed divided by two parties; and which, by whatever name they are distinguished in every age, shall be rivals, unless society can subsist amidst the annihilation of moral feeling, and the abandonment of every principle of civil freedom. One, resolute to degrade and subjugate mankind: the other, combating for social happiness against despotism. Such was the conflict: 'And be it perpetual!' resounded at Port Royal. It is the eternal struggle which shall exist between purity and corruption, between simplicity and craftiness, between THE ENTHUSIASM OF FREEDOM, AND THE ENTHUSIASM OF CRIME!"

If arguments were wanting in the cause of parliamentary reform, they might be found in an extract from the speech of the grand apostate, William Pitt. The words were prophetic of his future situation, when,

* They illustrate well that phrase of Henry Flood, a parcel of "incoherent" country gentlemen.

* The author of "Despotism; or the Fall of the Jesuits;" a political romance.

for the sake of power, he meanly bartered his virtue and independence, and like other apostates, sought to shelter himself under the convenient cloak of "existing circumstances," and an affected dread of the horrors of an excess of freedom, because the French revolution has as yet disappointed the hopes of the friends of liberty: while in reality, he, and many of his followers, make this dread only an excuse for their want of virtue in joining the opposite banners of despotism.

Pitt's words are not less true, because he afterwards betrayed the cause, and falsified the promises he then made. In introducing his motion in favour of a reform in the House of Commons, in 1782, he used the following memorable expressions, which, while they have sealed his own condemnation, and been verified by his subsequent fate, are deserving to be held in remembrance by the people, for their intrinsic justness, and as proceeding from the lips of a then unbought advocate.

"The defect of representation is the national disease: and unless you apply a remedy directly to that disease, you must inevitably take the consequences with which it is pregnant. Without a Parliamentary reform, the nation will be plunged into new wars: without a Parliamentary reform, you cannot be safe against bad ministers: nor can even good ministers be of use to you. No honest man can, according to the present system, continue minister."

In Ireland, the issue of the elections have shown the still lower state of apathy in which this country is sunk. To the disgrace of the County of Antrim, the minion of a most sensual court, is returned without opposition; and in Down, Lord Castle-

reagh resumes his seat, after a feeble show of a disjointed and ill-conducted attempt to oppose him. Alas! Our native country! Thou art fallen low in infamy, and debasement of character!

In the present mode of conducting elections, the people are held as nothing in the scale, and they meanly contribute to their self degradation. They permit themselves to be driven like so many cattle, and to be registered as the slaves of their landlords. It is not then to be wondered at, if their lords, seeing their meanness, and their crouching disposition, submitting to be trodden under the feet of an haughty aristocracy, should heartily despise them, and in their sordid calculations, and treaties with their fellow aristocrats, not pay the smallest regard to their interests or inclinations. A junction between the two rival houses of Hill and Stewart has taken place: and the County of Down is bought and sold. The patriotism of the house of Hill has never been conspicuous: and the short-lived popularity of the present possessor has been as transient, as his supposed merits. By his late treaty he has stamped an indelible character on his name. If the electors of the County of Down tamely submit to the degradation, they deserve the disgrace they will court by their acquiescence; and if they allow themselves to be thus treated, it would be a Quixotish folly to interfere between the kicker and the kicked.

Let us trace the root of this evil. The enormous expenses of elections, according to the present system, falling on the candidates, are a great bar to the freedom of elections. Few private persons can bear the expense, unless they expend on the mercantile principle of laying out a certain sum to bring in a

greater: and having bought, think they have a right to sell. Representatives should be put in free of all expense, that they may have no excuse to sell the interests of their constituents; and an elector should consider himself as degraded by an offer, from his landlord, or the candidate, of having his expenses at an election paid. People are accustomed to pay for themselves, when they go about their own business, and electors should consider the returning an honest representative, as peculiarly their own concern. We in vain complain of the corruption of the great. It is all idle declamation, unless the people reform themselves, and lay the foundation of independence in their own integrity. Electors must be honest before they can reasonably look for integrity in representatives. But through a perversion of sentiment, men too frequently complain of want of integrity in others, while they eminently display in themselves a similar defect. Before attempting to reform the state, let every man reform himself. Let electors first "pluck the beam out of their own eyes." If the people will not serve themselves, they can never expect that their representatives will faithfully or disinterestedly serve them: or that they will be treated with respect by others, if they fail in self-respect to themselves. If they suffer themselves to be sunk in apathy, and will not burst asunder their shackles, they have no right to look for others to do their business. Many of the poor tools of corruption, "whose poverty, but not whose wills consented," on being asked for their votes for an honest candidate, have replied, that although their hearts were with him, their votes must go on the side of power, lest their private interests should be affected. If

this plea be admitted for the very poor, surely no person removed from the hard pressure of dire necessity, ought to venture to stamp degradation on his character, by availing himself of it, or thus unblushingly proclaim his own baseness. The present fashionable standard of morality is very low; we ought to ascend to a higher grade in moral excellence, and in stern unbending integrity. If men will not be honest to themselves, they cannot trust to others to be honest towards them. It is absurd, like the waggoner in the fable, to call on Jupiter to assist them: they must prove themselves worthy of help, and of freedom, by their own exertions.

Samuel Whitbread's address to the electors of Bedford is placed among the Documents. As a concise recapitulation of the principal events of the last Parliament, and as a faithful exposition of an honest representative's conduct, it is highly deserving of attention.

As a curious trait in the times, it may be noted, that in the midst of the hurry of an election in London, the people waited for several hours, and suffered many inconveniences of a press, to obtain admission to the first opening of the new theatre at Drury Lane. Regardless of political events, they could thus waste their time, like the people in the lowest state of decline in the lower Grecian empire. Then the sports of the theatre, and the Hippodrome were more attended to, than the well-being of the state, and the efforts of patriotism were lost in the sensuality of the people, as well as of the court.

The Spanish papers mention the restoration of the Holy Tribunal of the Inquisition, since the expulsion of the French from Madrid. Is this the first fruits of British power, and Lord Wellington's victory at Sala-

manca? If so, the Spanish patriots, if such there are, may be tempted to exclaim: "Rather give us French government without the Inquisition, than British influence with it."

There is no probability of any favourable change in the councils of the American executive, until the meeting of Congress, which is fixed for the 2d of November. The nature and amount of the war-taxes will be then discussed and imposed, and it will be then seen, whether the people will bear a direct taxation in order to defray the necessary expenses of war. In the mean time, the campaign in Upper Canada has closed with the surrender of General Hull's army, although an expedition on the banks of the St. Lawrence is about to commence, and there appears a great desire in the Americans to retrieve their late disgraceful disaster, which may teach them the necessity of due preparation, and perhaps save them from more formidable defeats in future. It is some time before a country, which has cultivated peace, can, as it were, buckle itself to a war. Improvidence, inexperience, incapacity, are forward to display themselves, and are properly punished for their presumption. The organization of government must suffer a change, according to the change of circumstances; and the consolidation of federalism, even to a dictatorship of executive power, is better calculated for the safety of the republic, than a weak and irresolute administration, loosened in all its joints, and falling asunder into independent communities. The Americans appear to want one at the head of their government, who, like Washington, was equally capable to direct their councils in the cabinet, and to lead their armies in the field, and perhaps they could not do better, than follow the example of Bri-

tain, (which appointed a foreigner, Prince Ferdinand, to the chief military command,) by placing Moreau in a similar situation. It is to be observed, however, that American and European warfare are totally different in their nature; that the geography of the country impresses always a distinct character upon its warlike operations; and that the campaigns on the American continent approximate more to the Indian bush-fighting, than to the battle array on this side of the Atlantic. The Indian warfare still predominates, from its correspondence with the nature of the country; and it appears, that the British in Canada have very successfully cultivated an alliance which is much more formidable than has been generally supposed, by its knowledge of the country, its habits of warfare, its inveterate perseverance, and its terrifying character.

Great Britain has manifested, by issuing letters of marque against America, that there are no longer hopes of a speedy accommodation, although the delay in this measure of hostility has been attributed to the wish of increasing the funds of the crown draits, which arises from the captures made before an order of general reprisals.

We should think it better than lulling the people with the placabos of Mr. Brougham, and his party, to prepare them for the continuance of war, and thereby enable them in time to secure themselves against its consequences, and its privations. The war with America is inextricably connected and entangled with the war in Europe. It will never be made the subject of a *separate* negotiation. It has been brought on by European politics, and British pretension, and it will cease only, when a general arrangement has taken place, such an arrangement

as will give the world repose. There will, in the mean time, be a great shock given to the commercial interests on both sides the Atlantic, and all the hazard to the union of the states which may be expected from a sudden mutation of the capital of the country, but the knowledge of their true interests, and the supremacy of public opinion will overcome the great difficulties of their present situation. It was political courage that induced their executive to declare war, but it must be personal resolution, and military energy in every direction, that can put an honourable end to it.

The capture of Moscow will terminate the campaign in the North of Europe. The premeditated conflagration of that great capital is an event of modern barbarism, that equals, if not exceeds, any in ancient times, and casts a baleful light on the moral history of mankind. It seems to have made a strong impression on the Russians, when their general makes use of the expression, "that the entrance of the French into Moscow is *not yet* the annihilation of the empire;" which leads to the conclusion, that the loss of that city, deemed sacred and impregnable, is considered as nearly decisive of the fate of Russia. Yet certainly it appears, that the situation of the French is extremely critical, unless they be able to sustain a perfect line of communication with their resources during the winter; and Napoleon, placed in the Kremlin of Moscow, (that boss upon a battered shield,) appears insulated in the midst of an ocean-people. If the whole mass of that people be animated with the fire of enthusiasm, this would be a conflagration more to be dreaded by the French Emperor, than the flames of Moscow. It is probable, that religious bigotry will instigate to assassination, when

it cannot succeed by legitimate means, and the barbarism of the incendiary has already announced that many French officers had been "*killed privately*" in Moscow, and some of great distinction, being mistaken for Bonaparte. Such is the complication of crimes, which war never fails to introduce.

It is extremely probable, that Napoleon has proposed terms of peace. The salvation of Russia depends on her being able to protract the war: and for this purpose she will have the best assistance of Britain. Whatever Napoleon's views may be in lengthening out the war in the Peninsula, he certainly can desire nothing so much as a speedy submission on the part of Alexander. If this submission be not made: if the elements impede the march of the French to Petersburg: if the whole population of Russia be trained to a system of Parthian warfare, never hazarding a battle, and incessant in desultory attacks, the success of Napoleon, depending so much on rapidity of execution, may, like the first success of Charles the XII. be terminated by defeat, or by retreat equivalent to discomfiture. The fate of two of the greatest Empires on the globe will be decided in the course of a few months; and the fortune of the war in the Peninsula depends upon the event.

CORRESPONDENCE.

We thank a Correspondent for sending to us the following Letter.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

IN the last number of the Magazine, a copy of the Synod's minute relating to Mr. Adams and the congregation of Clare, is inserted, and